

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



MESSAGE FROM SDDVA SECRETARY WHITLOCK

Edith Wharton once said, “there are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

Thank you to our South Dakota communities for being both to veterans. Their lit candles light the pathways for our veterans and their mirror reflects aspiration for them to continue to succeed and supports them along their path.

Communities play an important role in every aspect of our lives. We have communities in our friends, our families, our employment, our neighborhoods, and in so many other places. Having a sense of community unites us. Being a part of a community can make us feel as though we are a part of something greater than ourselves.

A strong community is a place of opportunity. Big or small, a community can provide countless chances for growth and experience. With a community of people looking out for your best interests and working together for a common goal, there is no shortage of opportunities to succeed.

Communities have played a major role in all our veterans’ lives. The individuals who form our communities are the ones who are there when our young men and women deploy, they are there to assist families when loved ones are serving, they are there when our heroes return from deployments, and they are there to help them adjust back into their civilian lives.

Community leaders hire our veterans. They know our veterans are devoted, disciplined, hardworking, loyal and have a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experience.

Let’s continue to work together as a community to spread the light for all.

Black Hills Honor March	2
Fallen Hero Bridge Dedications ...	3
Sioux Falls Veterans Stand Down 4	
Character of Discharges	5
Cybercrime	6
TAA Crossroads Event	7
TAA Crossroads Event	8
Winner Veterans Stand Down	9
USD/Air Force Academy BB.....	9
Operation Chow Line	10
Upcoming Events.....	11



18TH ANNUAL BLACK HILLS VETERAN'S HONOR MARCH AND MARATHON

The South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association held its 18th annual Black Hills Veterans March and Marathon in the northern Black Hills, the weekend of September 17-19.

This year's march and marathon was the largest since its inception and included more than 286 participants from 19 states and two countries. The annual event helps to raise awareness and support for various veterans organizations.

The BHVMM included four different events where participants could compete individually or as teams; a 26.2-mile course, 16-mile mini march, five-person relay and 110-mile endurance march.

The 26.2-mile course began on the Mickelson Trail at the Rochford Trailhead and finished at the Deadwood Fairgrounds. Participants could compete by walking, running, or marching. The event included both military service members and civilians.

Funds raised during the march will be donated to Veterans Helping Veterans, Veterans Ranch, VA Hospice program in Sturgis, and South Dakota Veterans' Cemeteries Support Council.

SDDVA's Guy Arnold and his wife Sheri served as volunteers for the March, with Guy serving as a bike medic.



SD BRIDGES TO BE DEDICATED IN HONOR OF CPT ELMER RUSCH AND SGT WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting State Bridge Dedication Ceremonies to honor U.S. Army Air Force Combat Veteran Sergeant William Christensen and U.S. Army Air Corps Combat Veteran Captain Elmer Rusch.

The Rusch ceremony will be held Friday, October 8, 2021, at 11 a.m. (CT) at the DePuy Military Hall on the SDSU Campus in Brookings (1150 Campanile Avenue). Rusch graduated from South Dakota State University in 1941 and was commissioned as an officer through their ROTC program. In June of 1944 he was stationed in England with the 101st Airborne Division and was part of the glider force participating in the D-Day invasion. He was killed in action when his glider landed in a field completely covered by German fire.

The South Dakota HWY 14 Bypass Bridge over the east branch of Six Mile Creek, just west of Medary Avenue, will be dedicated to CPT Rusch.

The Christensen ceremony will be held Monday, October 11, 2021, at 1 p.m. (CT) at American Legion Post No. 194 in Parkston (221 W. Main Street). Christen-

sen was killed in action April 8, 1944, when he left with two Army bombers in the 491st Bomb Squadron and 341st Bomb Group. They were attacked by seven Japanese planes off the southeast coast of Hainan in China.

The South Dakota Pony Creek Bridge about a half mile west of the intersection with SD HWY 37, will be dedicated to SGT Christensen.

Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died while serving their country is an initiative of Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs.

"Whenever and wherever this nation has called, in times of darkness and danger, as well as in times of peace and prosperity, veterans have been there and have proudly carried the torch of liberty for all to see," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memory lives on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state," said Whitlock. "Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen will give us an opportunity of remembrance, reflection, and respect—for honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life."



SIoux FALLS VETERANS STAND DOWN



Last week, SDDVA hosted a booth at the Veterans Stand Down at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance in Sioux Falls.

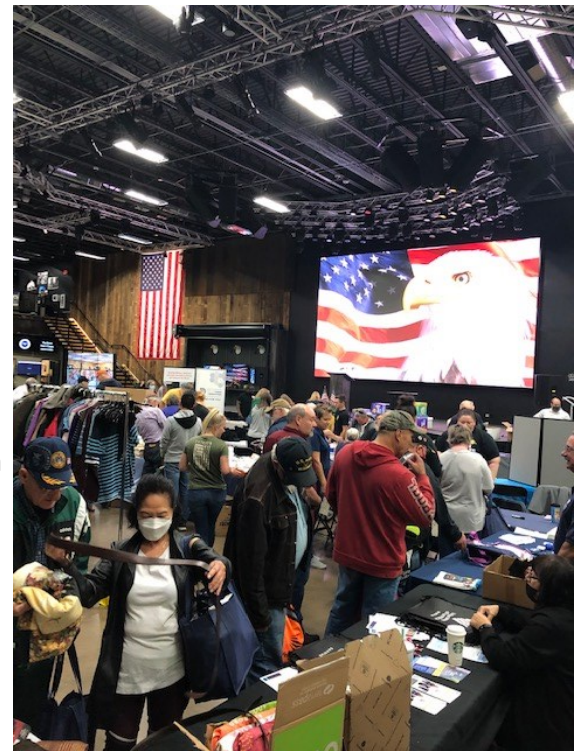
SDDVA's Brett Dickerson, Guy Arnold, and Shannon Phillips were on hand to assist veterans and answer any questions they might have. In addition to SDDVA's team; Minnehaha County VSO Kathy Richardson and Yankton County VSO Cody Mangold assisted with the Stand Down.

Over 225 veterans attended the event with more than 50 volunteers and vendors present. Veterans received a variety of clothing and hygiene products, healthcare screenings, haircuts, and a hot breakfast.

In times of war, the military term "stand down" was used when

exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefields to a place of relative security and safety. At secure base camp areas, troops were able to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care, mail and receive letters, and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in a safe environment.

Today, Stand Down refers to a grassroots, community-based program designed to help veterans address their individual problems and rebuild their lives. It is a time for the community to connect with their veteran population and provide a hand-up!



VA REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON PROPOSED RULE CHANGE PUBLISHED IN FEDERAL REGISTER ON CHARACTER OF DISCHARGE

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs is modifying benefit eligibility regulations for discharges considered “dishonorable” and seeks information to assist in crafting the new framework.

“If enacted, the new rule will modify existing regulations governing VA character of discharge determinations to update and clarify the regulatory bars to benefits.” said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy.

This change will make more veterans eligible to receive benefits.

The first public virtual listening session is Oct. 5 to seek feedback. The second session will be held Oct. 6. Each meeting will start at 8:50 a.m. Eastern Time and conclude at or before 4:15 p.m. Eastern Time. Virtual check-in will begin at 8 a.m.

Interested parties are encouraged to sign up and may submit written comments, including data and research, if unable to attend.

The virtual listening sessions will be held as WebEx events and will be open to the public to listen on a first come, first served basis.

Contact CODRegistration.VBACO@va.gov for information about the meeting and registering to speak or listen. Virtual attendance will be limited to the maximum allowed by WebEx.

Written comments on this request for information must be received by VA on or before Oct. 12. The request for information was published in the Federal Register Sept. 9.

Comments must be submitted through [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and will be available for public viewing, inspection or copies.

Types of Military Discharges



VA, NATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK TEACH VETERANS HOW TO FIGHT CYBERCRIME

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with the [Cybercrime Support Network](#) to protect veterans who are disproportionately targeted for identity theft and other online scams.

Launching in the fall of 2021, the partnership will provide educational resources that strengthen online security for service members, veterans, and their families and focus on [recognizing, reporting and recovering](#) from cybercrime.

The educational awareness campaign includes:

- Public service announcements via Comcast broadcast services and an online portal.
- [FightCybercrime.org](#), a resource database for those impacted by cybercrime and online fraud.
- [ScamSpotter.org](#), a website to help Veterans identify scams and report fraudsters.

"According to the [Federal Trade Commission](#), in 2019 our nation's veterans lost 44% more in damages to cyber-criminals compared to non-veterans," said VA Director of IT Strategic Communication, Office of Information and Technology Reginald Humphries. "This nationwide partnership provides needed education and resources to mobilize the veteran community to help protect themselves from the impact of these crimes."

The FTC also stated, between 2017 and 2021, the military and veteran community reported over \$820 million in losses from cybercrime. The results of these financial losses have a devastating impact on families, careers, and veterans' overall wellbeing.

"Our goal is to help veterans from becoming victims of cyber fraud," said Interim CEO and Chief Strategy Officer for Cybercrime Support Network Robert Burda. "Together, we are building a support system that will create a space for real change and cybersecurity innovation in the military and veteran community."

The partnership includes [33 nonprofit service](#) organizations. Learn more about [Cybercrime Support Network's](#) Military and Veteran Program at [Fight Cybercrime](#).



CROSSROADS

October 2, 2021

7:45 AM-4PM CST

National Guard Armory Watertown, SD

If you have 18 years of service, this event is for you.

←.....→
RSVP is REQUIRED

To register contact:

Mr. Kenny Wheeler

Transitional Assistance Advisor

605-737-6669

kenneth.d.wheeler.ctr@mail.mil
.....→

TOPICS COVERED

Retired Pay

Tricare

Survivor Benefit Plan

Military Funeral Honors

Survivor Outreach

MilitaryOneSource

Transition Assistance

Federal & State Benefits

VA Services

Address:

1951 N HWY 20

Watertown, SD



CROSSROADS

October 3, 2021

7:45 AM-4PM CST

National Guard Armory Sioux Falls, SD

If you have 18 years of service, this event is for you.

RSVP is REQUIRED

To register contact:

Mr. Kenny Wheeler

Transitional Assistance Advisor

605-737-6669

kenneth.d.wheeler.ctr@mail.mil

TOPICS COVERED

Retired Pay

Tricare

Survivor Benefit Plan

Military Funeral Honors

Survivor Outreach

MilitaryOneSource

Transition Assistance

Federal & State Benefits

VA Services

Address:

*801 W National Guard Dr
Sioux Falls, SD*





VETERAN STAND DOWN WINNER

When: Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. CT

Where: Old High School Gym, 301 S. Van Buren, Winner, SD

(1 block south of Casey's Convenience Store and across from the Catholic Church)

SERVICES OFFERED

Lunch
Employment Services
Clothing
Legal Assistance
VA Benefits
Readjustment Counseling
Housing Referrals
Much More!



Why: A Stand Down is a resource fair with local, county and state social service agencies along with VA staff available to discuss your needs. There will be opportunity to enroll in VA health care as well as program information and surplus items for those in need of winter clothing.

* Please bring a copy of your DD214, dependent information, and identification to the event. Documentation is needed so we can fully serve you and your needs.

For questions contact VA Black Hills:
Chistel Kitzelman at: 605-490-0029



USD TO HOST AIR FORCE

The University of South Dakota will host the United States Air Force Academy at the Sanford Pentagon in a non-conference men's basketball game at 1 p.m. on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

Tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on Oct. 19.

Veterans will receive free entry to the game. Additional tickets for family members and guests of veterans are \$10.

Following the South Dakota vs. Air Force game, the Sioux Falls Skyforce will play a regular season contest at the Pentagon. This will be South Dakota's twelfth appearance at the Sanford Pentagon.

SANFORD
SPORTS COMPLEX



Addressing food insecurity needs for veterans, service members, and their families, and their caregivers

OPERATION CHOW LINE

Meal is free for service members, veterans, their families and caregivers

Watertown, SD

Thursday, October 7, 2021

SD National Guard Readiness Center

Resource Fair 10am-1:30pm

Meal 11am-1:30pm

1915 SD HWY 20

For more information contact: Jill Baker, CAV Chair
605-370-9898

Paul Miller, CAV Vice-Chair
Volunteers of America
605-941-7960

Pat Herman, CAV Treasurer
Center for Disabilities
605-357-1577

All veteran service organizations, auxiliaries, and local partners in the area are welcome to set up a resource booth.



**BOB WOODRUFF
FOUNDATION**
Investing in the Next
Chapter for Our Veterans

We are proud to be a BWF local Partner. Our thanks to the Bob Woodruff Foundation and Craig Newmark Philanthropies for this funding to help us combat food insecurity among service members, veterans, their families and their caregivers.

Our special thanks to the DAV Arthur H. Muchow Chapter No. 1 for providing funding to help us combat food insecurity among South Dakota's service members, veterans, their families, and their caregivers.



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 7—Operation Chow Line—SDNG Readiness Center—(1951 State HWY 20)—Watertown—10:00 am—1:30 pm (CT)
Oct 8—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—CPT Elmer Rusch—SDSU DuPuy Military Hall (1150 Campanile Avenue)—Brookings—11:00 am (CT)
Oct 9—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8
Oct 9—Midwest Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)
Doors Open at 7:00 pm (CT)
Oct 9—BHSU Hero Appreciation Game—Lyle Hare Stadium—Spearfish—1:00 pm (MT)
Oct 11—State Offices Closed
Oct 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SGT William Christensen—American Legion Post 194 (221 W. Main Street)—Parkston—1:00 pm (CT)
Oct 14—Operation Chow Line—Wagner—10:00 am—1:30 pm (CT)
Oct 16—Women Veterans Alliance Event—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Oct 16—Gallantly Forward 2021 Gala—The Monument—Lacroix Hall—Rapid City—5:00 pm (MT)
Oct 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—SD Military Heritage Alliance Building (1600 W. Russell)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
Oct 23—Midwest Honor Flight Hangar Dance at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls
Oct 27—Veterans Stand Down—Old High School Gym (301 S. Van Buren)—Winner—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Nov 11—State Offices Closed
Nov 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SSG Gregory Wagner—Hanson High School (600 Juniper Street)—Alexandria—1:00 pm (CT)
Nov 13—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center (1401 Lazelle Street)—12:00—3:00 pm (MT)
Nov 25-26—State Offices Closed
Dec 7—Governor's Budget Address
Dec 18—Wreaths Across America—South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
Dec 24—State Offices Closed
Dec 31—State Offices Closed

2022

Jan 10—POW/MIA Chair of Honor Dedication—State Capitol—2:00 pm (CT)
Jan 11—Governor's State of the State Address
Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride
Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

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